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TAGS: [PREL](#), [MARR](#), [IZ](#), [KU](#)

SUBJECT: (C) PM ASSURES DEPUTY SECRETARY "WE'RE LONG-TERM ALLIES"

Classified By: CDA FRANK URBANCIC; REASON 1.4 (B, D).

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah assured Deputy Secretary Armitage April 19 that "we are long-term allies."

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Shaykh Sabah urged the US to seek a new UNSC Resolution on Iraq, and to resolve the situation in Fallujah -- peacefully if possible, but if not, then above all quickly. The PM advised the Coalition to stay away from holy places, and dismissed Muqtada al-Sadr as having little influence. He spoke condescendingly of UN envoy Brahimi. The PM reported that Russian National Security Advisor Ivanov had just told him Russia does not want the US to be defeated in Iraq, nor for it to withdraw its forces after the transfer of sovereignty.

[12.](#) (C) The Deputy Secretary briefed on developments in Iraq, from where he had just come. He also expressed appreciation for Kuwait's AIK support and stressed the continued need for it, promising that we would not take advantage of the GOK's generosity. He raised Article 98, and the PM replied that parliamentary ratification is not necessary. END SUMMARY.

[13.](#) (U) Participants: Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah was accompanied by MFA Under Secretary Ambassador Khaled al-Jarallah, MFA Americas Department Director Ambassador Khaled al-Babtain, Babtain's Deputy Aiham al-Omar, and a notetaker from the PM's office. The Deputy Secretary was accompanied by NEA A/S Burns, CDA, and

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ADCM/POL Chief (Notetaker).

[14.](#) (C) The PM greeted the Deputy Secretary and A/S Burns as old friends, emphasizing that "we are long-term allies, not short-term." He expressed warm greetings to President Bush, Secretary Powell, and "all our friends in the White House."

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He appreciated the MNNA ceremony and the attention shown to his Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs during their recent visit to Washington. He hoped the excellent state of the bilateral relationship would continue.

[15.](#) (S) The Deputy Secretary, having just come from Baghdad, sought the PM's advice on the way forward, especially on how to deal with the Sunnis. Noting that we are at a turning point in Iraq, he briefed on latest developments:

- In the South, Muqtada al-Sadr was at his strongest in Najaf and Karbala but his influence was not spreading, and locals were telling us they wanted him out. We were being careful to stay away from holy places.

- An Iranian delegation recently visited Baghdad to meet with the British, and the US sat in. The meeting was straightforward, without heat. Our message: we do not welcome Iran meddling in the South, nor want it to mediate with Muqtada; we will judge Iran by its behavior.

- In Fallujah, we have detained a significant number of foreigners; it is not clear how many of them belong to longstanding Yemeni and Syrian communities. We believe Zarqawi is there. There has not been one car-bomb since we surrounded Fallujah. Ambassador Jones is heavily involved in negotiations with local leaders. The first two days of talks went "95% very well." Arrangements were made for food, water and medical supplies, but we rejected a request for an open road through town: women and children are welcome to leave, but not men until they are identified and disarmed. After a break yesterday, negotiations were to resume today. We do not want Fallujah to become a rallying point for Sunnis, but we cannot allow those who killed our citizens so terribly to escape. The Deputy Secretary warned that military action might be needed, but we want to show the world that we tried to achieve a political solution and are not against the Sunnis per se.

- Sunni ex-generals with good reputations are being brought back into the Iraqi army under the Minister of Defense. This is, among other things, a signal that Sunnis have a role to

play in the future of Iraq.

- The IGC had not been as helpful as it could have. Sunni members threatened to resign in the event of heavy military action in Fallujah. Shia members have not been courageous in condemning Muqtada's actions. All IGC members fear their days in office are numbered because of the Brahimi plan.

- The USG looks forward to UNSYG Annan's report on the proper way to proceed in Iraq. UN envoy Brahimi has names in mind for a transitional government, but has not shared them with us. He did also ask us for a list of respected citizens from all groups who could be included in a technocratic government. Brahimi believes none of the IGC members are worth keeping, but we need to think carefully before excluding them.

- We are carefully considering a new UNSCR on Iraq. We need to know the UNSYG's thoughts first, but when the time is right, we intend to seek a Resolution, which should bolster the legitimacy of the transitional government, affirm the commitment of the UN, and provide an umbrella for international forces to contribute to the security of Iraq.
- Plans by Spain and Honduras to leave the Coalition are an unhelpful development. We have checked and do not see other key Coalition-members going wobbly. We realize that a new UNSCR could help some countries by giving political cover.

16. (C) PM'S ADVICE: Shaykh Sabah appreciated the briefing and offered the following comments:

- The US should work on persuading Annan to support a new UNSCR. With such a Resolution, other countries will "not feel shy" about contributing troops. Sergio Vieira de Mello did "such good work," but his tragic death caused Annan to have reservations about involvement in Iraq.

- The Coalition should stay away from holy places.

- Muqtada al-Sadr has little influence, and only rose to prominence because of the absence of eminent figures. The IGC leaders, especially Ahmed Chalabi, "don't know Iraq; they fled 20-30 years ago".

- The US needs to resolve the situation in Fallujah quickly -- peacefully if possible, but above all quickly.

- Most of the fighters in Fallujah are foreign. Perhaps a thousand are Saudi; even some Kuwaitis have been reported killed there. Car-bombs and such are mostly the work of foreigners.

- The US should do something about the slanted, inciteful coverage by Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya satellite television stations. Laughing, Shaykh Sabah recounted that he had asked CJCS Gen. Myers if he had a spare missile that could go off course.

- Brahimi was "a small employee" in the Arab League until Shaykh Sabah took him along when he mediated in Lebanon, and now he wishes he hadn't. Annan's dependence on Brahimi is surprising, as there are many others better than he.

- The IGC fills a gap until better people can be found. The problem is, the Iraqis usually "accept nobody" (i.e. as leader). "They are like our parliament: each member is his own party."

17. (C) RUSSIAN VIEW: Shaykh Sabah noted that he had just met with Russian National Security Advisor (ex-Foreign Minister) Igor Ivanov, who had told him Russia does not want the US to be defeated in Iraq, nor for it to withdraw its troops after the transfer of sovereignty. Ivanov had spoken in favor of an international conference, but the PM had replied this would not lead to a rapid solution; rather, the solution lay with the UN, "which enjoys world respect." Certainly a strong international presence would be needed after the transfer of sovereignty, otherwise the Iraqis would be at each other's throats.

18. (C) AIK FUEL: The Deputy Secretary expressed the USG's deep gratitude for Kuwait's generous Assistance-In-Kind (AIK) support, especially fuel for the US military. He stressed that the need for it still exists, and urged continued provision. He promised the need would not last forever and we would not take advantage of Kuwait's generosity by drawing on this support longer than necessary. The PM replied that there are two fuel issues:

- Fuel products for the Iraqi market: the GOK is perfectly willing to go on selling it to the designated company.

- Fuel for the military: the PM said this is between DOD and MOD. (COMMENT: Shaykh Sabah seemed to think this issue had been resolved in the recent Joint Military Commission; in fact, it was not discussed there at all, nor was it resolved

in the Defense Minister's meetings with senior US officials in Washington. END COMMENT.)

19. (C) ARTICLE 98: The Deputy Secretary hoped we could bring the Article 98 agreement into force by a quiet exchange of notes, as we have done elsewhere. The PM replied that there is no need for parliamentary ratification; an exchange of notes will suffice -- but we should not talk about it publicly. (COMMENT: The only thing needed for the agreement to enter into force is for the GOK to give us a diplomatic note confirming it has completed its domestic legal requirements; we already sent a similar note months ago. After the meeting, the MFA's al-Omar told ADCM/POL Chief he thought the GOK note would come quickly. END COMMENT.)

110. (U) The Deputy Secretary has cleared this message.

11. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
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